



Information for Prospective Library Trustees

Surrey Libraries Administration Office

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Do you want to be more involved in your community? Becoming a Trustee with Surrey Libraries can be a rewarding way to help shape this valued community service. This guide offers information about the role of the Library Board and how to become involved.

The Role of the Library Board

The Library Board is made up of volunteers who are appointed by Surrey City Council as outlined in the B.C. Library Act. Each volunteer's initial two-year appointment may be renewed up to three additional terms for a total of eight years.

The Board represents the citizens of Surrey and oversees the governance of the Library by enacting policies directing the work of the organization. The Board delegates operational responsibility to the Chief Librarian and communication between the Board and staff is carried out through the Chief Librarian.

The Board's principal duties fall into six main categories:

- **Strategic Planning:** defining the Library's values and setting out its mission and vision from time to time
- **General Oversight:** ensuring Library policies and plans support the set mission and vision and in particular:
 - helping to develop a literate and learning community
 - supporting intellectual freedom
 - ensuring equitable access to a wide range of resources
 - ensuring that programs and services meet the needs of Surrey citizens
- **Financial oversight:** ensuring financial responsibility and accountability of the Library by:
 - Approving the annual budget and overseeing financial reports and controls
 - Contracting for an independent audit and reviewing the audit report
- **Advocacy and Fund Raising:** advocating for the Library in the community and with government and assisting in the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of prospective major supporters
- **Chief Librarian support:** selecting, evaluating, and coaching the Chief Librarian
- **Board Effectiveness** – regularly assessing the Board's effectiveness by ensuring diligent attention to attendance and participation of its own membership, freedom from conflict of interest, and adherence to a code of ethics.

What Makes for an Effective Library Trustee?

Personal experience with library use

Trustees need to understand the importance and place of libraries in our rapidly changing world.

Interest and commitment

Trustees should have a commitment to the Library and to new services for our changing society. They must be interested in their community and in the diverse people the Library serves.

Available time

The Library Board has 8 regular meetings a year, and may hold additional committee or special meetings. Trustees need to be able to dedicate sufficient time to accommodate the needs of Board responsibilities. A minimum commitment would be an average of one evening meeting a month and at least 10 hours per month. The time required is to accommodate board meetings, to review the board package and other written communications throughout the month, participate in committee work and attend library programs and events. Attendance at library and community events is part of the time commitment made by Trustees.

A good team member

Trustees should be prepared to participate in the work and varied discussions of the Board.

Unanimous decisions may not always be possible, but once made, trustees need to support the decisions of the Board.

Variety of experience

A balanced Board has members with a variety of personal, education, business, and community involvement backgrounds.

Detailed Job Description

The Library Board has the legal responsibility for oversight of the delivery of public library services in Surrey.

Responsibilities:

- Adopt written policies to govern the operations, services, and programs of the Library.
- Hire a Chief Librarian to oversee management and day-to-day operations, and evaluate their performance.
- Participate in the strategic planning process.
- Prepare and submit an annual budget to Council.

Duties:

- Regularly attend and participate in meetings of the Board and committees.
- Request information to ensure that issues are understood and decisions are well-informed.
- Understand the Library's vision, mission, values, policies, and services.
- Attend special events and represent the Library at community functions.
- Advocate for the Library in the community and represent the community to the Library.
- Advocate for the needs of the Library with City Council and the provincial government.
- Participate in library fundraising activities.
- Participate in the British Columbia Library Trustees Association.
- Be committed to learning about libraries and trusteeship.

Qualifications and Experience:

- Must be a Surrey resident and must not be employed by the City of Surrey or Surrey Libraries.
- An interest in library service, knowledge of the community, ability to work in a political environment, leadership abilities, and teamwork skills.
- Previous service on volunteer boards or committees and fundraising experience

Benefits to Trustees

Being a member of the Library Board is a rewarding experience, an opportunity for learning, a chance to meet new people, and have some fun.

Learn

- about your city, your library, and library trusteeship.
- about issues relevant to the Library community, such as literacy, intellectual freedom, and equitable access to information.
- through the Trustee Orientation Program provided by the B.C. Library Trustees Association, attendance at provincial or national library conferences, and through participation in the work of the Board.

Meet New People

- Library staff and trustees are committed, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable people from wonderfully varied backgrounds.
- "Library fans" are everywhere and you'll meet them when you represent the Library at community events.

Serve Your Community

- Contribute to the development of a learning community.
- Take pride in helping make Surrey a strong community. In turn, you will be contributing to our citizens' pride in their community through making the Library the best it can be.
- Be an advocate for literacy and for other library initiatives.

How to Proceed

For more information than what's provided in this package, please contact:

Surinder Bhogal, Chief Librarian

Telephone: 604-598-7304

sbhogal@surrey.ca

To apply:

Check the City's website www.surrey.ca or the local newspapers in the fall for the notice about applications to City boards, commissions, and committees.

The deadline for applications is usually mid-November. Your application should include a letter expressing your interest in serving on the Board and a resume that describes your business, educational, and other volunteer or community experience, along with contact information including your street address. Send your application to:

City Clerk

City of Surrey

13450 104 Avenue

Surrey, BC V3T 1V8

Or by email to clerks@surrey.ca

Appointments to the Library Board are normally made by City Council in December.